GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:214
ANSWERED ON:16.08.2011
FOODGRAIN DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM
Chauhan Shri Sanjay Singh;Karunakaran Shri P.

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Supreme Court has observed that the Government has failed to check starvation and malnutrition in the country despite overflowing stocks due to the faulty foodgrain distribution system;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether the Government proposes to introduce a new policy for foodgrain distribution; and

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the steps taken/proposed to be taken to rectify faults in the foodgrains distribution system and make it more responsive to the needs of the poor and ensure that the benefits of the scheme reaches the intended beneficiaries?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS)

(a) to (d): A Statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF THE STARRED QUESTION NUMBER 214 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 16.8.2011 IN THE LOK SABHA.

(a) TO (d): The Hon'ble Supreme Court, in its Order dated 14.05.2011 in Writ Petition (Civil) No. 196 directed the Union of India, as a one-time measure, to reserve 5 million tons of food grains for distribution to the 150 poorest districts or the extremely poor and vulnerable sections of society. This Order was made to ensure that no starvation deaths may take place and people can be saved from malnutrition as far as possible. Further, the Hon'ble Supreme Court directed that this 5 million tons reserved by the Union of India may be allocated on the recommendation of the Central Vigilance Committee (CVC) on Public Distribution System. As per directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, based on the recommendations of the CVC, an additional allocation of 2,57,336.67 tons of Rice and Wheat has been made on 21.7.2011 for three months to 45 districts in 8 States.

Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) has been strengthened and streamlined over the years and it is a continuous process. Government has been regularly reviewing the functioning of TPDS and issuing advisories to State Governments/UT Administrations. They have been requested to undertake periodical review of lists of Below Poverty Line and Antyodaya Anna Yojana families, eliminate bogus/ineligible ration cards, ensure timely availability of foodgrains at Fair Price Shops (FPSs) and greater transparency in the functioning of TPDS through use of Information technology, improved monitoring and vigilance at various levels. Several initiatives have been take by the Central and State Governments for introduction of new technologies such as Computerization of TPDS operations, use of bar-coded ration cards/coupons and biometric identification of beneficiaries.